

## THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

By Henry Cragin Walker

**H**AVE you ever visited Duxbury Beach during or after a great northeast storm on a winter's day? The breakers as far as one can see are a smother of white foam, and they burst upon the beach as though anxious to wash it away; their thunder is so loud one has to shout to be heard.

Great stretches of kelp strow the beach, and among them are broken tubator traps mingled with gaily painted buoys. One winter I collected enough rope to last a lifetime.

I always hoped I would find a lump of ambergris, or a female figurehead that had once adorned an ancient ship, torn from its ocean bed.

But be careful about going too near the surf, for every little white monster wave, towering over its fellows, may engulf you.

So far as I know, there have been no great wrecks for many years. Ships keep far away from the treacherous Duxbury sands.

Twice each night a coast guard walks from the Gurnet to the bridge; a cold and lonely vigil in the winter.

### A Pearsome Tale

A coast guard once told me a fearsome tale: He was walking on the beach at night during a terrific gale. Suddenly, hearing a long whistling call, he turned and saw what looked like a great sea animal rushing towards him. He ran for his life, then tripped and fell. The monster sped past him, still shrieking like a demon. The coast guard shut his eyes and prayed; when he opened them he saw that the 'demon' was a huge cask; one head of it had been smashed, and the powerful wind, entering the top, whistled out through the bung-hole, making the terrifying sound.

Oldsters may remember Harney Williamson, who owned a commodious duck-blind half way between the bridge and Gurnet light. I have often stayed there over night. Harney was a famous cook who owned a shaggy Irish Water Spaniel, and often, when a goose or duck had been wounded and was swimming about perhaps 50 yards from shore, Harney would stand at the water's edge and direct the dog. The spaniel would occasionally lose sight of his prey, and rising on a high wave, look towards Harney for advice. Harney would wave a hand and the dog would turn in

the direction pointed out. Seldom did he fail to retrieve the bird.

One cold November day, having shot two wild geese (they weighed from ten to twenty pounds each) I walked during a storm with the geese tied around my neck from Harney's hideout to the railroad station. It was high tide, and walking in loose sand is no joke. I also carried a gun, much ammunition and a heavy suitcase. When I arrived at North Station I was barely able to stand.

### Geese Are Curious

Wild geese resting on the water are curious-minded: If a dog or a fox struts along the sand they will almost always swim towards it; ducks are wary; they know well that man is deceitful, but a goose will buy a 'gold brick' time after time. Mark Twain once said that if a cat jumps on a hot stove he'll never do it again, but the author adds; neither will he jump on a cold stove.

Harney Williamson knew well that geese have inordinate curiosity, so when a duck landed perhaps 50 yards from the shore, he would throw a rubber ball to the edge of the water and his dog would retrieve it. At once the goose would stretch their necks and swim toward land to get a closer view of the dog; then the sportsmen would give a shout, the geese would rise and a fusillade of shots usually killed or wounded almost half of them.

Harney Williamson has long since gone to the Happy Hunting Grounds. I hope he has luck, and meets his old friend, the dog.

The MAYFLOWER was a vessel of 120 tons. In its most historic voyage, it held 101 Pilgrims, not counting the sailors.

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